

CITY OF BELMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

SUMMARY MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2009, 7:00 PM

Chair Horton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Horton, Mayer, Parsons, Mathewson, Frautschi

Commissioners Absent: Mercer, Reed (Commissioner Mercer arrived at 7:04)

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Senior Planner DiDonato (SP), City Attorney Zafferano (CA),

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS – CDD de Melo noted that discussion of Item 6A will need to be postponed if there is not a quorum when they reach that point on the agenda, since two Commissioners will be required to recuse themselves from the discussion.

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) – None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR - None

5. OLD BUSINESS

5A. 2007 Bishop Road – Final Landscape and Color/Material Plan Review

SP DiDonato summarized the staff Memorandum, recommending approval of the Landscape Plan and color and materials as proposed, and with the added condition that the base color be changed to a brown-tan color for a greater consistency with the neighborhood and natural setting.

Commissioner Mercer arrived during SP DiDonato's presentation.

Commissioners Mercer and Frautschi questioned the actual colors proposed for the roof and stucco base paint.

Richard Tapp, project architect, explained that the original roof color that was submitted was Spanish Clay and that the proposed tile is a Newport Blend and is considerably browner than the original submittal. He added that the original stucco wall and trim color was darker than the proposed Hacienda that is one grade in value lighter. He stated that he will be painting a sample 4x8 sheet of plywood and invited anyone from the City who so desired to review the sample at the site.

Commissioner Mercer felt that the applicant had made a lot of water- and maintenance-smart revisions in the Landscape Plan and were very considerate of the natural environment. Her only concern was that the proposed color was too saturated – that it would be adorable on a cottage or trim of a small Victorian but not appropriate for this large, elegant mansion.

Commissioners Frautschi, Parsons, Mathewson, Mayer and Horton all concurred that this is a wonderful project and design, were very complimentary of the architect and landscape architect, and agreed that it will be one of the nicest homes in Belmont. Vice Chair Mayer added that he would like to see the base paint toned down a bit.

MOTION: By Commissioner Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson, adopting the Resolution approving the Final Landscape Plan and Color and Materials Plan for 2007 Bishop Road (Appl. No. 2008-0075).

Ayes: Mercer, Mathewson, Parsons, Frautschi, Mayer, Horton
Absent: Reed

Motion passed 6/0/1

Chair Horton stated that this action may be appealed within 10 calendar days.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

6A. PUBLIC HEARING – 1500 Ralston Avenue

To consider a Conditional Use Permit, Design Review, and Tree Removal Permit for Notre Dame de Namur University (NDNU) to construct a new elevator and accessible entrance for St. Mary's Hall. The proposal entails the enclosure of approximately 135 square feet under the existing building overhang to accommodate the accessible lobby area. No other changes to the building elevations or parking areas are proposed. Appl. No. 2009-0007;

APN: 044-360-070; ZONING: PD (Planned Development)

CEQA Status: Categorical Exception per Section 15301 & 15302

APPLICANT: Lewis Architecture

OWNER: Notre Dame de Namur University

PROJECT PLANNER: Carlos de Melo (650) 595-7440

Chair Horton and Commissioner Frautschi recused themselves from this discussion as they live within 500' of the project. Vice Chair Mayer assumed chairmanship of the meeting for this item.

CDD de Melo summarized the Staff Report. He noted that he had forwarded a PDF file to Commissioners that indicated a potential location adjacent to the main entrance and the Hannibal Pump Station area for planting of the 3 mitigation trees, and invited the Commission's discussion on the location of the trees. Staff recommended approval of the project with the conditions specified in Attachment III.

Responding to Commissioner Mercer's question about why the applicant proposed to put the mitigation trees down at the street instead of further up on the campus, CDD de Melo thought they were looking for a location large enough to have some space between the trees, which would not be the case around the building under discussion, but deferred the question to the applicant for any background information.

Commissioner Mayer asked what kind of tree is being removed. CDD de Melo replied that it is a "scrub" Oak that has some shoots that added to the diameter of the tree comes to about 16" DBH.

Acting Chair Mayer was curious as to why all projects at NDNU are designated as being on Ralston Avenue.

Acting Chair Mayer opened the Public Hearing.

Judith Greig, representing NDNU, responded to Vice Chair Mayer's question by stating that she assumed the reason that Ralston is the address for the entire parcel is because the only official access to the University campus is the Ralston main entrance. Referring to the project under discussion, Ms. Greig gave a history of the University in Belmont and noted that St. Mary's Hall is the largest classroom building on the campus, having been built in 1951-1952 with very few renovations since that time. The University is currently engaged in a \$2 million renovation project that primarily involves updating the labs and the classrooms with very little structural work. The next phase is to make the 2nd floor more accessible to disabled people and to enable transport of lab materials more safely. Regarding tree placement, she concurred that the tree should never have been placed where it is, so they located a relatively bald spot on the Ralston frontage that might be helped by the plantings.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mathewson, seconded by Commissioner Parsons, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 4/0/2/1 by a show of hands, with Commissioner Frautschi and Chair Horton recused and Commissioner Reed absent.

Commissioner Parsons suggested that they may need to relocate the handicapped parking closer to where they are putting the elevator. He also stated that he would like to see Redwood trees in a bare spot on Ralston Avenue, located between the pump station and tennis courts, on the street side of the sidewalk. He felt that when these trees are grown they might have the additional impact of mitigating some of the sound from the Koret field. He would be fine with putting the trees where they are proposed but suggested that they consider the alternate location.

Commissioner Mathewson said that the proposal looked very reasonable and good to him.

Commissioner Mercer echoed Commissioner Parsons' sentiment about the parking, suggesting that they consider putting a handicap spot adjacent to the door and ramping the curb if it isn't already. She would have preferred to see the trees placed up the hill, but suggested that Redwoods do better in the moist, cool valley.

MOTION: By Commissioner Parsons, seconded by Commissioner Mathewson, to adopt the Resolution approving a Conditional Use Permit and Associated Detailed Development Plan, Design Review, and Tree Removal Permit for Notre Dame de Namur (NDNU) University at 1500 Ralston Avenue (Appl. No. PA2009-0007) with the conditions attached and the added condition that Redwood trees be substituted for the proposed box Olive trees.

Ayes: Mercer, Mathewson, Parsons, Mayer

Noes: None

Recused: Horton, Frautschi

Absent: Reed

Motion passed 4/2/1

Acting Chair Mayer noted that this item may be appealed within 10 calendar days to the City Council.

Chair Horton and Commissioner Frautschi returned to the dais.

7. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:

CDD de Melo reported as follows:

7A. Motel 6 – 1101 Shoreway Road
No update at this time.

7B. NDNU (Koret) Athletic Field
No update at this time.

7C. Charles Armstrong School – 1405 Solana Drive
He is planning to hold a meeting with neighbors, City staff, Charles Armstrong School during the first week in June to continue to discuss issues surrounding the current McDougal field, the school and some other issues.

7D. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project
No update at this time.

7E. San Mateo Development – North Road/43rd Avenue
No update at this time.

7F. 900 Sixth Avenue – Belmont Vista Facility
No update at this time.

7G. Caltrain Landscape Area
No update at this time.

7H. Parking Study – Downtown Village Areas
SP DiDonato is working on the parking study, which should be ready for some preliminary data to be forwarded to the Commission at the end of May or early June.

7I. High-Speed Train (HST) Project – San Francisco to San Jose
No update at this time.

7J. 900 South Road – Single-Family Dwelling
This project was approved a few years ago but has fallen into construction lapse issues, has changed ownership 3 times and is in pre-foreclosure. The Building and Code Enforcement Divisions acts on complaints as they are received and have sent numerous letters to the property owner to try to resolve some of the issues. The project will come under the guise of the new Construction Time Limit Ordinance but fines will probably not start accumulating until January 2010 – 24 months after the adoption of the ordinance.

Commissioner Frautschi stressed that the property is an eyesore and looks abandoned, and that the City needs to take whatever action it can to make the site safe and not accessible.

CA Zafferano added that this item will be discussed at a meeting of the Administrative Code Enforcement Team (ACET) scheduled for the following morning. They will need to determine the actual status of the project (i.e., is it in foreclosure and is it past the Time Limit Ordinance) and come up with a plan of action.

Responding to Commissioner Parsons' question as to who is responsible if the contractor took out the permits, CA Zafferano said that ultimately the property owner is responsible.

7K. Graffiti Removal – Old County Road
CDD de Melo has contacted the Police Department and believes the City has sent at least two letters to the property owner. The City has a graffiti-removal program in place, and once the time limits have been exhausted the City can abate the nuisance and forward a bill associated with the graffiti removal to the property owner. He will keep the item on the agenda until it is resolved.

Other Items

CDD de Melo reminded the Commission that June will be a busy month – the first meeting will be a Study Session on the Belmont Village Zoning Amendments and on June 16th they will get the first review of the entirety of the 2007-2014 Housing Element. Commissioner Mercer asked if there is a chance they could be sent a preview email of any of the material so that they have more than just a 3-day weekend to review it. CDD de Melo agreed to send any material to them that is "camera ready" in advance of the usual Thursday delivery day.

Commissioner Frautschi asked that the file on Chuck's Donuts be reopened since there are at least two dead trees and weeds, and the property looks abandoned. CA Zafferano agreed to add this to the agenda of the ACET team the next morning.

Commissioner Parsons asked if the property that the City purchased on El Camino is rented or occupied. He believed that he heard loud music coming from the house when he was driving down the street with his windows closed. CDD de Melo responded that the City is still working with a previous tenant of the building to get their belongings removed from the building.

Vice Chair Mayer mentioned a Forbes report that listed Belmont as number 11 of the top 25 best places in the country in which to live well.

9. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2009

Liaison: Commissioner Mercer

Alternate Liaison: Commissioner Mathewson

Commissioner Mathewson stated that he will not be able to attend.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, June 2, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

Carlos de Melo
Planning Commission Secretary

CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the
Community Development Department.

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment.